

A "NEW JOURNALIST'S" PLAN

He Schemed to Have Maria Barberi After Her Acquittal Sit in the Electric Chair.

WANTED A SUNDAY ARTICLE.

He Asked a Prominent Society Woman to Take the Girl to Sing Sing Prison, Strap Her in the Chair, and Write the Story.

When Maria Barberi, at the end of her second trial, on Thursday evening, Dec. 10, 1896, was pronounced not guilty of murder, it was the common belief that the public interest which had been awakened by her extraordinary case would quickly subside, and that she would be allowed to pass into the obscurity which was natural and agreeable to her.

The wretched Italian girl had been a prisoner for one year seven months and sixteen days. She had suffered the uncertainty of facing death in the electric chair after her first conviction. She had experienced the sensation of being for weeks in the brightest glare of publicity. And she was bewildered and weary when it all came to an end. She sought seclusion and privacy.

While the public dismissed the girl and her prospects from consideration, an alert representative of "the new journalism" kept a watchful eye upon her movements for purposes of his own. In the most desolate days of her imprisonment Maria had found a kind friend in Mrs. Sage, wife of the Warden of Sing Sing prison. Mrs. Sage took a sympathetic interest in the girl, and by slow degrees taught her to read, write, and to speak English. Maria became very fond of her benefactor, and one of her first inclinations after obtaining her freedom was to seek Mrs. Sage and again thank her for what she had done.

It is related on excellent authority that on the day following Maria Barberi's release "a gentlemanly and diplomatic" representative of "the new journalism" called at the residence of a warm-hearted society woman who had labored untiringly in the poor girl's behalf, and asked for an interview. Inasmuch as he expressed a desire to be of service to Maria and her family, the husband of the kind-hearted woman courteously admitted him and summoned his wife to the parlor.

A Diplomatic Proposal.

With his most suave manner the gentlemanly and diplomatic new journalist thus addressed the lady: "Madame, the great Barberi trial is over. Our editor in chief has sent me up to congratulate you. He regrets that stress of business prevents him from calling in person. He knows what a great philanthropist you are and he feels that you must be opposed to capital punishment. He knows, further, that you are an author, and he wishes to furnish you in the grand columns of his Sunday paper the greatest opportunity of your life for good."

The lady thus addressed refrained from speaking, but smiled sympathetically, and the young man proceeded: "This trial has proved that no jury will condemn a woman to death, [he quite forgot that the jury on the first trial had done so.] The public is dead against the execution of women. You have an eloquent pen, and we wish to give you an opportunity to use it in the cause of your sisters. We have information that to-morrow at 10 o'clock A. M. Maria Barberi, with her family, will call upon you to thank you for what you have done for her.

"We have therefore prepared a plan of action and have gained Maria's consent. She would go anywhere with you. We know that you have many calls upon your purse. Now, if you will do what we ask of you, not only will we give you this grand opportunity to serve your sex, but we will give you \$100 to-morrow evening at 7:30 o'clock, when you hand me the article we desire to have written."

At this point the "diplomatic" representative of "the new journalism" paused for an instant. His listener was a trifle pale, but she retained her affable demeanor, and inquired: "What is it that you wish me to do?"

The Plan for a Horror.

"As I said," continued the young man, "Maria has consented to this arrangement. When she calls here to-morrow you will take her with you alone up to Sing Sing, ostensibly to call on Mrs. Sage, who was so kind to her. We reporters will meet you there. You will conduct Maria into the execution room, place her in the electrical chair, strap her in, and if possible a little electricity might be applied. You can then observe her manifestations of horror. Note the minutest details, and then come immediately home, write out your impressions, and hers also, and have the manuscript ready for me when I call in the evening. Just think of such an experience. Never again will a woman run the risk of execution in the State of New York, and you will have the \$100 to do what you please with."

For several seconds there was silence in the room. The lady's face grew a shade paler, but she continued to smile. During the many months that she had worked and pleaded for Maria she had learned to control her temper as well as her emotions. When she spoke it was in a calm tone, and she said:

Rebuke to New Journalism.

"Sir, please go back to your chief and say to him from me that you executed your mission well. I leave town to-morrow at noon on business of my own, therefore I cannot assist you. Do not forget to add, however, that even if I could, I would not go to Sing Sing. It is not by sensationalism and sentimentalism, I am convinced, that capital punishment will be abolished, and when it is, it will be abolished for men and women alike. Tell your chief also that he seems to forget that the jury exonerated the once-condemned girl on account of epileptic irresponsibility, and that such a course as you propose savors of a barbarism and cruelty to which her friends would never consent."

The "new journalist" preserved his gentlemanly bearing and withdrew from the lady's presence as gracefully as possible. Being persistent and resourceful, he possibly sought other means of accomplishing his purpose, but the fact that no harrowing details of Maria Barberi's mock electrocution have as yet been published is indicative of the complete failure of his efforts.

Refused to Reopen Treadway Case.

Magistrate Cornell, in the Centre Street Court, yesterday refused to reopen the case of the negro Treadway, who was committed the previous day to answer a charge of having committed perjury in his testimony against Police Captain Sheehan. The Magistrate said he did not think he had power to reopen the case, and he had no disposition to do so. The application to reopen was made, as Treadway is still wanted as a witness against Capt. Sheehan. Perry Stedde, a colored sailor on the battleship Texas, who was arrested on the same charge made against Treadway, was paroled in custody of Inspector Allaire, who agreed to be responsible for his appearance Tuesday.

Phi Beta Kappa Banquet.

The Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Association in New York will have its banquet in the Hotel Savoy on the evening of Feb. 27. Among those who have consented to make addresses are Bishop Potter, President of the National Council of the Phi Beta Kappa Society; the Rev. Dr. Melancthon Woolsey Stryker, President of Hamilton College; the Rev. Dr. Edward Everett Hale, and Dr. Lyon G. Tyler, President of William and Mary College, Virginia. Members desiring tickets for themselves and guests can apply to the Committee on Arrangements, of which Jacob F. Miller is Chairman, at 120 Broadway, by Feb. 15.